

Message Text

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TAGS: OAS, PAN

SUBJECT: OAS SECRETARY GENERAL'S STATEMENT ON PANAMA CANAL
TREATIES

1. FOLLOWING IS FULL TEXT OF STATEMENT OAS SECRETARY
GENERAL ALEJANDRO ORFILA MADE AT PERMANENT COUNCIL SESSION
APRIL 19 REGARDING US SENATE APPROVAL OF PANAMA TREATIES.

2. THE APPROVAL BY THE US SENATE OF THE NEW PANAMA CANAL
TREATIES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND PANAMA IS A MAJOR
STEP IN A LONG AND STILL COMPLICATED PROCESS DESIGNED TO
FURTHER PEACE IN THE AMERICAS. THE EVENTUAL COMPLETION OF
THIS PROCESS SHOULD SYMBOLIZE THE FINAL COMING OF AGE FOR
THE NATIONS OF THE AMERICAN HEMISPHERE - NOT IN A LEGAL
OR IN A POLITICAL SENSE BUT AS A CONCRETE REALIZATION OF
THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM IS
GROUNDED.

3. THE FOUNDATION OF THIS SYSTEM AND OF THE OAS LIES IN A
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MUTUAL ACCEPTANCE BY THE AMERICAN NATIONS OF SEVERAL
ELEMENTAL PRINCIPLES: THE JURIDICAL EQUALITY OF ALL OAS
MEMBERS, WHETHER LARGE OR SMALL; THE BELIEF THAT NO OAS
MEMBER HAS THE RIGHT TO INTERVENE, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY,
IN THE INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OF ANOTHER MEMBER
STATE; AND THE DETERMINATION THAT PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP IN

THE HEMISPHERE - POLITICAL, CULTURAL, AND ECONOMIC -
DEPENDS UPON A COMMON COMMITMENT BY EACH NATION TO WORK
COOPERATIVELY FOR THE WELL-BEING OF THE ENTIRE AMERICAN
COMMUNITY OF NATIONS.

4. THESE PRINCIPLES ARE ENSHRINED IN THE BASIC TRADITIONS
AND LEGAL DOCUMENTS OF THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE, ESPECIALLY
AS CODIFIED IN CONTEMPORARY TERMS IN THE RIO TREATY OF
1947 AND IN THE CHARTER OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN
STATES, BUT THEY ARE ALSO AFFIRMED IN THE CHARTER OF THE
UNITED NATIONS. LEGAL OBLIGATIONS OF THESE DOCUMENTS ARE
BINDING ON ALL COUNTRIES.

5. HOWEVER, THE GAP BETWEEN PROFESSING FAITH IN THESE
PRINCIPLES AND REALIZING THEM IN PRACTICE HAS BEEN A
PROFOUND ONE. IT HAS BEEN FILLED IN PART ON VARIOUS
OCCASIONS AND IN SPECIFIC WAYS BY THE CONCERTED ACTIONS
OF OAS MEMBERS.

6. TODAY AN ADDITIONAL STEP HAS BEEN TAKEN IN OPENING THE
DOOR TOWARDS AN IMPROVED HEMISPHERIC FUTURE. NEGOTIATIONS
BETWEEN PANAMA AND THE UNITED STATES - WHICH WERE
INITIATED PURSUANT TO A RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE OAS
COUNCIL - PROVED LONG AND DIFFICULT BUT TWO TREATIES, ONE
TURNING THE CANAL OVER TO PANAMA BY THE YEAR 2000 AND THE
OTHER GUARANTEEING ITS NEUTRALITY BEYOND THAT YEAR, WERE
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AGREED UPON, SIGNED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE CHIEFS OF STATE
AND HEADS OF GOVERNMENT OF THE AMERICAS, AND NOW
SUBJECTED TO THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESSES OF BOTH OAS MEMBERS.
WHILE QUESTIONS AROSE ABOUT SPECIFIC RESERVATIONS
ATTACHED TO THE NEUTRALITY TREATY DURING THE RATIFICATION
PROCESS, FIRM ADHERENCE BY PANAMA AND THE UNITED STATES TO
THE LETTER AND SPIRIT OF THE RIO TREATY AND THE OAS CHARTER
WOULD ASSURE THAT POTENTIAL DIFFICULTIES ARE AVOIDED.
IT IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE ENTIRE HEMISPHERE
THAT PANAMANIAN SOVEREIGNTY BE RESTORED FULLY OVER ALL
AREAS OF ITS NATIONAL TERRITORY AND THAT THE PRINCIPLES OF
THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM BE PROFESSED NOT ONLY IN THEORY
BUT IN PRACTICE.

7. BUT IF THE NEW TREATIES ACHIEVE THEIR INTENTION, THE
AMERICAN NATIONS WILL AGAIN HAVE DEMONSTRATED FOR MANKIND
THAT THEIRS IS A REGION WHICH SEEKS TO SERVE AS A GLOBAL
MODEL FOR PEACE. THE NEW TREATIES DO NOT PRESAGE A
POLITICAL MILLENNIUM IN THE AMERICAS. THERE ARE OTHER LONG-

STANDING AND SERIOUS REGIONAL GEOPOLITICAL DISPUTES WHICH
REQUIRE RESOLUTION AND THE NEW TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

AGENDA BEFORE THE HEMISPHERE LIES AS YET UNTOUCHED. THE TREATIES, THOUGH, OFFER A FAVORABLE PROSPECT FOR APPROACHING AND DEALING WITH THESE OTHER MATTERS ON THE GROUNDS THAT A MILESTONE FOR HEMISPHERIC HARMONY COULD PROVE AT HAND.

8. THE NATIONS AND PEOPLES OF THE AMERICAS OWE A PROFOUND DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO THE GOVERNMENTS AND PEOPLES OF PANAMA AND THE UNITED STATES. THEIR ACTIONS OVER RECENT MONTHS EVIDENCE THAT NOT MILITARY POWER, ECONOMIC STRENGTH OR TERRITORIAL SIZE ARE THE FINAL DETERMINATION OF PEACE IN THE AMERICAS BUT RATHER THAT PEACE DEPENDS UPON A VISION OF A COMMON REGIONAL FUTURE OF FREEDOM AND JUSTICE, A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION FOR THE COMMON GOOD AND UNCLASSIFIED

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A DETERMINATION TO ACT ON THE BASIC PRINCIPLES ACCEPTED BY OAS MEMBER STATES.

9. IN ABIDING BY THIS VISION AND THESE PRINCIPLES, PANAMA AND THE UNITED STATES ARE HELPING TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM AND THE OAS TO COME FULLY OF AGE AS A LEGAL AND GEOPOLITICAL MODEL FOR ALL AREAS OF THE GLOBE THAT SEEK AN END TO ARMED COMBAT AND THE CONTINUING EXPANSION OF THE BOUNDARIES OF PEACE. CHRISTOPHER

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